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Breeding birds will be keen to take up their territories and we will be able to listen to their songs and pick up tips on how to remember them. Weather permitting, we will explore the Brecks, where we should find Siskins, Crossbills and Stone Curlews, and perhaps even glimpse a Goshawk as well as the Suffolk Sandlings, where we should hear the beautiful song of the Woodlark and see Stonechats, Dartford Warblers and perhaps Tree Pipits.

Without doubt, you will have many memories to take home.

The course will involve a series of complementary activities to ensure you become familiar with the identification and behaviour of birds which are seen. These will include:

- Watching birds from a distance in the various habitats
- Viewing birds in close-up at the Flatford bird ringing site
- Learning the art of fieldcraft
- Learning key visual clues to help you identify species by sight
- Learning key songs and calls to help you identify species by sound

We will divide our time between watching and listening to birds out in the field and working indoors reviewing and revising what we have learned. We will seek out as many species as possible to view in ‘real time’, but we will also use the latest DVD identification guides to cover those species which may elude us, to ensure you have as full a picture as possible.

Song birds are normally most active during the first few hours after dawn, so pre-breakfast bird walks are an important part of the itinerary. However, we deliberately start no earlier than 0700 as the full cacophony of the dawn chorus at 0400 makes it difficult to learn effectively! These early sessions before breakfast on Saturday and Sunday mornings will be around Flatford.

Weather permitting, we will organise one or more bird ringing demonstrations, which will enable you to get really ‘close-up and personal’ with some of the birds. Seeing birds in the hand under the guidance of expert trainers is an excellent way of understanding the nuances of bird identification and will reinforce the observations you can make through binoculars.

### About the Tutor

Steve Piotrowski is one of the most experienced birders in Suffolk and author of the acclaimed The Birds of Suffolk. He is an environmental consultant working mainly on ways of increasing the populations of threatened and protected species such as Barn Owl, Turtle Dove and Tree Sparrow. He has worked as an Associate Tutor with FSC at Flatford Mill for over 10 years.
What to Bring

As the course involves field visits you will need a Thermos, lunchbox, waterproof clothing and stout shoes or boots.

It is important that everyone has their own pair of binoculars. 8x30 or 8x40 are good general purpose ones if you are borrowing a pair - the first figure is the magnification and the second the diameter of the larger lens in mm. Don’t bring a pair with magnification over 10x - these are not suitable for birdwatching. Above all, check that you can see clearly and there is no distortion.

FSC has published a fold-out chart - The Top 50 Garden Birds - which is available at the Centre for reference (and for sale at £3.50!).

A field guide will also be useful to help you develop your identification skills. Two we recommend are:
- Birdwatchers’ Pocket Guide by Peter Hayman, published by Mitchell Beazley (c £10)
- Collins Bird Guide (2nd Edition) by Lars Svensson, Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterstrom (Paperback 17.99 but less than £10 on Amazon)

The course will involve some walking each day but there will be nothing too strenuous. However, it will be along footpaths and tracks on occasions. Strong, comfortable walking boots or wellies are therefore important, as is a good selection of warm and weatherproof clothing in natural colours please: NO BRIGHT REDS AND YELLOWS! Hats, scarves and gloves may be useful. The Centre also has a stock of waterproof jackets, trousers and wellingtons, which may be borrowed if needed.

Bring with you any appropriate membership cards that would allow free entry to local nature reserves. Please note that permit fees, applicable to any nature reserves visited during your stay, will be in addition to accommodation/tuition fees paid to FSC.

Accommodation for this course will, where possible, be in rooms close to each other in order to minimise any disturbance by any early rising to other guests.

What the fee includes

Residential course fee includes:
- Full board accommodation including cooked breakfast, picnic lunch, homemade cakes and an evening meal. Vegetarian and other dietary option available.
- Up to 8 hours teaching time a day, plus relaxing breaks for meals and refreshments.
- Tea and coffee making facilities available throughout the day.
- Use of resources including library, workrooms, studios and the Centre grounds.
- Transport during the courses.
- Insurance to cover cancellation, personal belongings, personal accident, legal liability and medical emergency.

If you choose to be a non-resident on a residential course, the fee will include all the above except accommodation and breakfast. Due to the early-morning bird walks, non-residents are encouraged to take breakfast at the centre, which is available at a supplement.

**Start and finish times**

Check in on Friday is available from 1600, but the first formal activity is dinner at 1900 (with the bar open from 1845) followed by an evening classroom session.

Residents: Please aim to arrive between **1600 and 1800** on Friday to allow us sufficient time to show you to your accommodation and around the communal areas.

Non-residents: You do not need to arrive quite so early but please can you be here by **1800** as we need to show you the communal areas as well. The course may involve early-morning ringing demonstrations, walks and excursions, so it might be better for you to book your breakfast at Flatford. Further details can be supplied at the time of booking.

The course ends at **1600** on Sunday.

**How to book**

Bookings can be made by telephoning the Centre; we are open 0930 – 1700 weekdays and most weekends. Alternatively, bookings can be made via our website: www.field-studies-council.org.